

Little Neck family hopes to bring adopted son home from Russia

Little Neck, NY— Today, Congressman Steve Israel (D-New York) stood with Nick and Dania Mavros, to call on Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the ban on Russian adoptions by American citizens. The Mavros family is in the process of adopting a one-year-old boy named Ari. This past December, the couple traveled to Russia to begin the adoption process, and they met and bonded with the child for the first time.

Rep Israel said, “President Putin is jeopardizing the future for thousands of Russian orphans and their adoptive parents here in the U.S. over a political disagreement with the Administration. The adoption process is difficult enough for any family without adding international politics to the mix. Children should never be used as political pawns, but in this case that is exactly what’s happening.”

Dania Mavros said, “Waiting for news to see if we will be allowed to bring our baby home has been one of the most trying times in our lives. Devastating does not capture the emotional roller coaster that we are enduring every day. We try to keep our spirits up with the hope that our family will be united and our beautiful little boy does not have to grow up in an orphanage without the love of his Mommy and Daddy who are waiting for him in the United States.”

According to the Russian Children’s Welfare Society, Russia is currently home to more than 700,000 orphans. Over the last 5 years an average of 10 percent of all international adoptions by American families came from Russia, making it the third most likely country for an international adoption. Adopting a child from Russia takes an average of 12 to 18 months and usually costs between \$20,000-\$30,000 in legal fees, flights, administrative costs and more.

On December 28, 2012, Putin signed into law a ban on American adoptions of Russian children. This was enacted in response to the Magnitsky Act, which imposes U.S. travel and financial restrictions on human rights abusers in Russia. On January 17, 2013, Israel and a bipartisan group of nearly fifty Members of Congress sent a letter to President Putin urging him to allow any families already in the adoption process to move forward. Last week the Russian courts made a decision to permit adoptions that had been approved prior to the ban taking effect on January 1, 2013, to proceed. However, this decision offers no clarity for families like the Mavros, who are still waiting for a court date, and are left to wonder whether or not their

adoption will be allowed to advance.

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